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# Water Pollution Control Permit Requirements for Mobile Wash Businesses

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Water Protection Program technical bulletin

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Establishments engaged in vehicle or building washing may be required to obtain a permit to discharge the wash water to the surface or allow it to infiltrate to ground waters. The statute and regulation that applies is Missouri Clean Water Law, §644, RSMO, and 10 CSR 20-6.010.

## Who Needs a Permit?

Any person that discharges wash water needs a permit. Wash water is considered wastewater regardless of what kind of material is washed off or the biodegradability of the detergents. Single family residences or persons washing items that are for their personal use are exempted. The permit requirement applies to two types of activities: one, to businesses that wash their vehicles, equipment or structures (unless the wash water discharge is covered under another permit), and two, to businesses that wash vehicles, structures, or equipment as a primary source of income.

A permit is required for discharges onto a gravel parking lot or a paved lot, regardless of whether or not the water leaves the property.

If vehicle washing (or any other type of washing) is done indoors and the spent wash waters are directed into storm sewers or outdoors, a permit is required. Spent wash water is considered a process wastewater. Indoor drains should be connected to a sanitary sewer if available. If discharged to a sanitary sewer, a permit is not needed.

## Background

Since October 1972, with the passage of the Clean Water Act, it has been illegal to discharge wastewater without a permit in a location where it may cause pollution to waters of the United States. Nationally, the permit is referred to as a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. In Missouri, it is called a State Operating Permit. Also, state law and regulations required construction and operating permits for both discharge and no discharge facilities for both surface and ground water discharges.

## Permit Requirements

To be in compliance with state and federal law, mobile washers can do the following (in preferential order):

1. Wash on a pad or in a wash bay or building with a floor drain that is connected to a sanitary sewer system. If the sewage treatment is done by a Publicly Owned Treatment Works, the owner of the treatment plant must be notified of the washing operation;



2. Collect all water that runs off before it soaks into the ground or runs off the site and either recycle the water or deliver it to a wastewater treatment plant. Collection and storage or recycling equipment is available but may require a state construction permit; or
3. Obtain a Missouri State Operating Permit for every site where they wash vehicles or buildings; the permit may require the wastewater to be collected and treated.

### **Fees and Application Forms**

Construction fees are \$500 and require the submittal of plans and specifications. State Operating Permits (NPDES) are \$1,500 per year and require the submittal of forms A and C. Applications and fees should be mailed to the appropriate regional office. A regional office map is available on the Web at [www.dnr.mo.gov/regions/deqregions.htm](http://www.dnr.mo.gov/regions/deqregions.htm).

### **For More Information**

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